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Through the looking glasses

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Chapter 1 by Peter Knobloch

Maxi was distracted by the muted sounds coming from the gardens. She rounded some bushes and found a pair of warriors engaged in battle.

They were fighting with bare fists. It was obvious from their movements that they were both skilled and deadly serious. Every punch thrown was either blocked or brushed aside with skill. She thought it a trick of the mind when a flash of light announced the connection of fist and chest. The contestant was flung backwards to the ground. Without ceremony, the other pugilist took a step forward and kicked his fallen opponent in the ribs. Maxi cringed as the downed man grunted in pain.

The winner dropped to a knee and raised his elbow, his fist poised to hammer his foe. His hand seemed to glow with an incandescence. Maxi found herself holding her breath as anticipation and dread filled her. When his hand landed upon the other warrior's chest, Maxi let out a screech of surprise.

The fighter looked up, an expression of shock on his face, his motionless arm still tense and fully extended downwards. He raised his other hand, made a quick gesture and vanished.

Maxi stood motionless for a full minute. What the hell had just happened? She found herself walking forward before realizing what she was actually doing. She sat on her knees next to the prone man and considered him. Was he alive? How does she check that again? His chest was not rising and falling with the telltale sign of life.

They fit comfortably on the bridge of her nose. When she focused again on her surroundings, she let out a scream and almost fell backwards.

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